

Throughout his career, Robert Oliver has proven to be a highly effective leader who was always committed to excellence in public service. As he gets ready to spend more time on other causes and endeavors of interest to him, we thank him for his service and we wish him continued success and best of luck for the future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CITY  
COUNCILMEMBER MATT GARCIA  
OF THE FAIRFIELD, CA CITY  
COUNCIL

**HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 9, 2008*

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Councilmember Matt Garcia, who faithfully served the city of Fairfield and whose life was tragically taken last week.

Councilman Garcia, in his 22 years, made an indelible mark on the city of Fairfield and as a young leader he inspired many to make this a better world through service and sacrifice.

As the youngest member ever elected to the Fairfield City Council, Matt understood the potential for young people to effect change in their communities.

He coached Little League, rejuvenated the Fairfield Youth Commission, and vigorously supported the Police Athletics League; Councilman Garcia was a tireless advocate for the youth of Fairfield.

At the age of 16, Matt told his fellow students that he would become the mayor of Fairfield one day and never lost sight of that goal.

From his days at Armijo High to his victorious race for City Council, Matt was able to bring together diverse people and organizations.

My thoughts and prayers are with Councilmember Garcia's family and our community at this very difficult time. I am deeply saddened by his passing and know his memory will live on for generations through the work of those he inspired.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN W. ROD-  
GERS—SUPERINTENDENT OF  
SCHOOLS, SANTA ROSA COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 9, 2008*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize my good friend and neighbor, Superintendent Johnny Rodgers. Johnny has been the Superintendent of Schools, Santa Rosa County since 1999. The people of Santa Rosa County re-elected him twice since then and he is retiring from public service at the end of this year.

A career educator, the Pensacola News Journal recently wrote "For years, Santa Rosa County has relished the title of being a high-performing public school system." As Johnny gets ready to turn over the reins to a new superintendent, he should be proud of how good a school system he has led and mentored.

Johnny started his life of public service in 1968 in the United States Air Force. He served honorably in Vietnam and Thailand and upon returning to civilian life, Johnny received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of West Florida. Johnny doesn't talk much about his service during the Vietnam conflict but we all know how important his contributions were and I want to thank him again for his service during a time of war.

Before Johnny's current position, he served in numerous public education positions in Santa Rosa County, including teacher, coach, assistant principal and principal. Named Elementary School Principal of the Year in 1994 and Middle School Principal of the Year in 1997, Johnny has done it all.

He has been married to the former Vick Rogers for 40 years and together they have two children and four grandchildren.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF  
JORGE ALBERTO SUBIRATS

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 9, 2008*

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, the city of Mobile and the State of Alabama, recently lost a dear friend, and I rise today to honor Jorge Alberto Subirats and pay tribute to his memory.

A native of Havana, Cuba, Jorge came to the United States at the age of 12. He, along with his brothers and sisters, left Cuba in 1961 and flew to Miami. Jorge and his siblings soon moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where they were joined by the rest of their family in 1963. Jorge graduated from John Carroll High School in Birmingham in 1967 and from Auburn University in 1972.

A resident of Mobile for 36 years, Jorge was perhaps most widely known for his service as a realtor with Roberts Brothers for 31 years. He was consistently one of the company's top agents each year, an achievement due in large part to the trust and admiration he earned from his clients.

Jorge met every definition of a community leader—he served as a high school teacher and coach, a swim and dive coach, and a Sunday school leader. He was active in many civic organizations, including the Mobile Area Kiwanis Club and the Mobile Association of Realtors.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering a dedicated community leader, a friend to many throughout Alabama, as well as a wonderful husband and devoted father. Jorge Alberto Subirats will be dearly missed by his family—his wife of 25 years, Valerie Jean Subirats; their four children, Lindsey Loper, Michael Jorge Subirats, Laura Katherine Subirats, and Katherine Anne Subirats; his mother, Elvira Margaret Subirats; his brothers, Fernando Subirats, Gustavo Subirats, and Luis Subirats; and his two sisters, Silvia Theye and Margaret Hopkins—as well as the many countless friends he leaves behind. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all during this difficult time.

TRIBUTE TO 173RD AIRBORNE  
PARATROOPERS

**HON. JO ANN EMERSON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 9, 2008*

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize and to submit for the RECORD a story concerning the events of July 13, 2008, and an account of the heroics of the paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne. Reports such as this one remind every American of the bravery, the courage, and the willingness to sacrifice of every servicemember in the U.S. Armed Forces—but this tale is an exceptional example. I am honored to share it with you and with the American people.

I'm sure you heard about 9 soldiers being killed in Afghanistan a couple of weeks ago. As AP reported it, it was a "setback", the "newly established base" there was 'abandoned' by the Americans. That, of course, was the extent of their coverage.

Steve Mraz of Stars and Stripes and Jeff Emanuel tell the rest of the story. Emanuel, who went out and dug into the story sets the enemy force at 500 while AP sets it at 200. Frankly I'm much more inclined to believe Emanuel than AP.

July 13, 2008 was the date, and Jeff Emanuel, an independent combat reporter sets the scene:

Three days before the attack, 45 U.S. Paratroopers from the 173d Airborne [Brigade Combat Team], accompanied by 25 Afghan soldiers, made their way to Kunar province, a remote area in the northeastern Afghanistan-Pakistan border area, and established the beginnings of a small Combat Outpost (COP). Their movement into the area was noticed, and their tiny numbers and incomplete fortifications were quickly taken advantage of.

A combined force of up to 500 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters quickly moved into the nearby village of Wanat and prepared for their assault by evicting unallied residents and according to an anonymous senior Afghan defense ministry official, "us [ing] their houses to attack us."

Tribesmen in the town stayed behind "and helped the insurgents during the fight," the provincial police chief, told The Associated Press.

Dug-in mortar firing positions were created, and with that indirect fire, as well as heavy machine gun and RPG fire from fixed positions, Taliban and al Qaeda fighters rushed the COP from three sides.

As Emanuel notes, the odds were set. 500 vs. 70. Even so, Emanuel entitled his article, "An Alamo With a Different Ending." The 500 terrorists apparently didn't realize they were attacking US Army paratroopers.

The unit in question was 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, led by 1LT Jonathan Brostrom.

The first RPG and machine gun fire came at dawn, strategically striking the forward operating base's mortar pit. The insurgents next sighted their RPGs on the tow truck inside the combat outpost, taking it out.

That was around 4:30 a.m.

This was not a haphazard attack. The reportedly 500 insurgents fought from several positions. They aimed to overrun the new base. The U.S. Soldiers knew it and fought like hell. They knew their lives were on the line.

The next target was the FOB's observation post, where nine soldiers were positioned on